

## **Keeping Up Appearances by DrStrangerThings**

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**Genre:** Death, Friendship/Love, Hurt/Comfort, Loss, Monsters, Multi, Mystery

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**Characters:** Dustin Henderson, Eleven (Stranger Things), Jim "Chief" Hopper, Jonathan Byers, Joyce Byers, Lucas Sinclair, Mike Wheeler, Nancy Wheeler, Steve Harrington, Will Byers

**Relationships:** Eleven & Mike Wheeler, Eleven/Mike Wheeler

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**Summary:**

After El's return, everything has been going well for the kids and citizens of Hawkins. However, perhaps this was too good to be true... As new threats arise and not all is right. Prepare for a story of Love, Pain, and The Upside Down! (Will be focusing on the Mike/Eleven relationship as the core amidst the chaos)

# **Keeping Up Appearances**

## **Author's Note:**

This is my first fan fic, so I look forward to seeing the feedback. This first chapter will be establishing the feel I am going for. As put in the summary, this will focus a lot on Mike and Eleven! Enjoy, and look at the end of this chapter for more notes!

## **Chapter 1: The Game of Secrets**

A Saturday in Hawkins, everything is calm.... Quiet. The late November chill runs through the veins of the oaks which stand outside, triumphantly relishing in the breeze that journeys by the houses and streets of this sleepy town. Bags of leaves lean against the brick walls of many homes, raked earlier that afternoon. Although it is cold outside, the distant giggles and shouts of young children can be heard if ears were strained. Perhaps at the local playground or in the backyards of one of these residences.

Now, it is visible. A bicycle is on the ground of one particular home. It is of the common type seen in late 1984, headlight at the front, raised seat, and tires filled with enough air to get to and from wherever a kid needed to go these days.

This home, who owns it? Why, it was the Wheeler residence, of course. However, the family wasn't all present at the moment. Ted, patriarch of the home, had gone to the grocery store. Certainly he was now gazing longingly at one of those roast chickens... and eventually he would be able to feast on one. But it was Karen, his wife, who had told him to cut down on eating those types of meals. She knew he had a passion for chicken from the moment that she had met him back in Indianapolis. He gorged himself upon all types of the

common bird, from all the nations of the world. It was certainly a strange craving, but perhaps it had some sort of family history, a tradition of sorts. She had never really gotten to asking him that. Where was Karen, though? Why, she was with their young daughter, Holly, as she had taken her to a play date with one of her young "friends". Of course, it was just an excuse for Karen to get out of the house. She was now happily catching up with Cindy's mother. Cindy, of course, was Holly's play date. Who else was left? Ah, of course, young Nancy Wheeler! Well, she wasn't necessarily that young anymore...or at least, that's what she liked to think. Where was she, though? Probably with Steve or Jonathan, it was one of them, that's for sure...

But now, focus must be brought back to their home, because certainly there must be someone there. Yes, there was. Two young kids, in fact. Mike... and Eleven, "El" for short. But wait, hadn't she disappeared?

Yes, she had, but now she had returned. It had been a year since her disappearance at Hawkins Middle School, and her arrival back had just occurred a mere two weeks ago. It was a joyous reunion, tears were shed, and her and Michael Wheeler were now together again. He had searched for her, and was almost giving up but suddenly, El came back from wherever she had been, safe and sound...

Heh. Everything had been happy since then. It was time for catching up, and today was so very important. It was the first time Mike and Eleven were together...alone. And they both were very excited...

"So..what do you want to do, El?" Mike asked this with a chirpy tone.

They both were sitting on the basement couch, and Mike was clearly bouncing with excitement.

“We have the whole afternoon to ourselves!” He added on, making sure to emphasize that point.

She remained silent, just staring at him with those large, brown eyes. Her gaze was piercing into his mind...into his heart. He felt his cheeks start to warm, his palms sweating. He always got like this when he was so close to her, it was just unavoidable.

There was no answer, so he cleared his throat and spoke.

“Uh..well... m-maybe we can... play games? Atari?”

El nodded her head slowly, signifying her agreement with the idea.

“Yes”

Mike was relieved. He couldn't always be sure that she would want to do what he suggested. Although he did know she took a sudden liking to video games. Mike had gotten his Atari 2600 a little later than his other friends, but now, he was catching up for that lost time.

He grabbed her hand, it was cold. She glanced down, observing this action with a peculiar look on her face.

“Let's go upstairs! What do you wanna play?” Mike grinned bashfully. He had a bunch of games, the Atari had become his favorite thing to play with. Well, there was still D&D, of course.

“The.. the... Dungeon.. game.” El said this, struggling to explain which one she meant to describe. Mike certainly had no problem

pinpointing the title.

“Adventure. That's what it's called! OK, let's pop it in!”

Mike guided El to the living room where the console was installed. El sat down slowly on the La-Z-Boy, certainly still cautious about her surroundings. Mike always saw that as adorable, she didn't want to break any of the furniture in the house. Perhaps she thought Mike would get angry.

As Mike started rummaging in the small container where he kept his games, he turned over to El.

“Hey, El. You know... you don't have to be so careful around the house like that. You won't break the chair...”

El opened her mouth, about to speak, then she closed it again. It was often that she had done that, but today she seemed awfully quiet. Well, she was quite quiet since the day she had returned, but today it was more than usual. He had just assumed that it must have been the trauma of her year missing, the bad memories she held.

“Um... is everything alright, El?” Mike observed her from the floor as he sat on the carpet.

Her eyebrows scrunched up, It seemed like she was confused. Eleven cleared her throat and breathed a little faster, then she nodded her head. Something was definitely going on.

"Uh..are you sure? Do you want something to eat? Eggos?" He said this quickly, now starting to feel a little uncomfortable.

She wasn't acting how he thought she would. Not even a smile from her face. Today was supposed to be their time together, and now, she was acting strange. He wasn't angry at El, Mike just wanted to find out what was troubling her. Though that might get her furious at him... he didn't want that.

"No. No Eggos, Mike." In a blunt manner, El stated this, still looking unhappy.

"Are you sure? I can go and-"

"I...Said..No."

Now, there was a firmness to it...anger. Mike was taken aback, and just sat there frozen. This wasn't her usual self, not at all. He stared at her with wide eyes, and now he noticed her eyes. There was a fiery darkness in there... and he didn't like it. He didn't like it at all.

"o-ok. If you... say so..."

He turned back quickly and started sorting through the cartridges again. He grabbed the game quickly and plopped it in. His eyes were narrowed down. It seemed like El wanted to be left alone now... it was... it was probably just one of those times, a mood swing perhaps.

He slowly turned on the TV and powered on the system. The title, "Adventure", popped up and now, he had the controller ready. He was going to let El have the first turn, so he was going to have to face her. She had been dead-silent for the last few minutes.

"Uh... El... the game. It's all set up!" Sheepishly, he turned around and handed up the controller to her. He felt her taking it into her own hands, but he didn't look directly at her.

"Mike."

"Y-yeah?" Now, he finally glanced up towards her face. She didn't have the same look anymore, thankfully, she was smiling. Although, it was a weak one. She looked exhausted and tired beyond belief.

"I'm sorry.."

"For what? El... it's oka-"

"No. Friends aren't..mean. I was... mean to you" She sighed and looked down. It looked like there were dark shadows under her eyes. Mike was baffled. They hadn't seem to be there before. But perhaps he was so ignorant and oblivious to how El was feeling, because he was so caught up in himself. "*Ugh! Stupid Mike!*". He had been so unfair to El this whole time.

“El? You weren’t mean to me at all... I was mean! I’m sorry...”

El shook her head. “No...Mike..”

“Yes, it was me. I wasn’t paying attention to how you were feeling this whole time!” Now, Mike got up and walked over to her, grabbing her hand as she looked into his eyes. She seemed to flinch a bit, almost opposing the contact.

“I-I want to know what’s wrong. Tell me... please..”

She continued to stare at him, but now, her smile disappeared. She was breathing shakily, and she looked down once again.

“There’s... there’s nothing wrong..”

“El.... friends don’t lie. I told you that! Now c’mon, tell me, I won’t get mad!” He playfully pushed her shoulder, giving an encouraging smile.

She grinned back half-heartedly, but at that moment, she realized she couldn’t tell him. It was too soon, and Mike was too happy, and she would hurt everybody, and... and... oh no... it was coming back. It was taking over. Those thoughts were... bad. Bad. Bad. Bad! Bad!!

Pain and a Flash of light filled her head.

El suddenly screamed out in pain, as she tugged her short hair with both of her clenched hands. Mike jumped back in surprise as this suddenly happened. Her shout continued to fill the air.

“El?! What’s wrong?! W-wait... lemme get you..” He started to wrap his arms around her, ready to take her upstairs to the bathroom, but then, something stopped him... a force. As he reached for her, he felt a field of energy push him back. His vision went black for a moment, and when he finally got a sense of his surroundings, he found himself across the room, behind the television.

“Uh...uh... what....El...?!” Mike was lying on the floor, still dazed from what had just occurred. His head ached, probably from it hitting the floor, he thought. Then, he glanced around the room quickly, his eyes widening with shock. El... she was gone. Where was she? How long had he been there?

Mike heaved himself to his feet, groaning, and observed the damage that had been done. The game cartridges lay scattered across the floor, and the container they had once been in was tipped on its side.

He edged his way towards the television set. Hopefully it wasn’t broken. As he went to check, frantic thought filled his mind. Why had El used her powers on him? Why did she scream like that? Most importantly, where was she?!

The TV screen wasn’t broken, but now, the game was off. Instead, there was the flickering static of a station out of range.

Finally, Mike headed toward the La-Z-boy, where El had been sitting. There were the obvious creases of where she lay. However, the chair now was in its reclined position. It also seemed like the force of the power had pushed the chair into a diagonal position. Mike pushed it back into place and glanced towards the rest of the home. He had to find El. There was obviously something wrong with her, something not right. She.. she had used her power against her own will, it seemed.

Now, Mike headed towards the staircase, not knowing of what to expect. He would search the house first. Unsure of what to expect and find, Mike was filled with a certain dread... and a little bit of fear.

Nothing would be normal anymore.... that's for sure.

#### **Author's Note:**

Hey there! Hope you enjoyed the first chapter of this fic. I would gladly accept feedback as well as your own requests for any story you would like me to do. Thanks for all the love and you'll be able to find this on fan fiction as well. Also.. what are some of your ideas for this story and where it might lead..?